1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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£50,555,000. The figures illustrate the preponderant importance of livestock and particularly cattle and pigs in Irish economy.

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The remaining £14,000,000 was made up of crops and turf, the latter alone accounting for £5,938,000. Among the crops, potatoes came first, with a value for the year of £3,786,000. Oats, cabbage, and barley accounted for about £900,000 each; and there were a few other items of smaller values, the largest of which was fruit at £466,000.

These figures of the agricultural products rather underestimate the amount of tillage products raised. In the words of the Census Report, they "do not include any part of the produce which was used for further agricultural production in the Saorstat whether that part was used on the farm on which produced or sold by one farmer to another — e.g. milk fed to calves, potatoes fed to pigs, hay, turnips, mangels fed to cattle, corn used for seed, horses used for farm work." [1]

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Within this generality of the monetary value of the goods produced, one can begin to take account of the wide difference of the sizes of the holdings engaged in this agricultural production. A glance at the figure illustrating this kind of economy by relative size of acreage (Fig. 1) will bring the matter out.

The agricultural community carried on this production upon farms of very widely different character. Holdings range in size from one acre or less to 500 or more. Those under 30 acres comprise 23 per cent of the total acreage of agricultural land in the Saorstat, those of 30–50, 17 per cent; those of 50–100, 24 per cent; and those of 100–200, 19 per cent. Farms larger than 200 acres cover only 16 per cent of agricultural land.

In general, the smaller ones practice the more generalized economy, their production being markedly different from

[1] *Agricultural Output of Saorstat Eireann, 1926–27* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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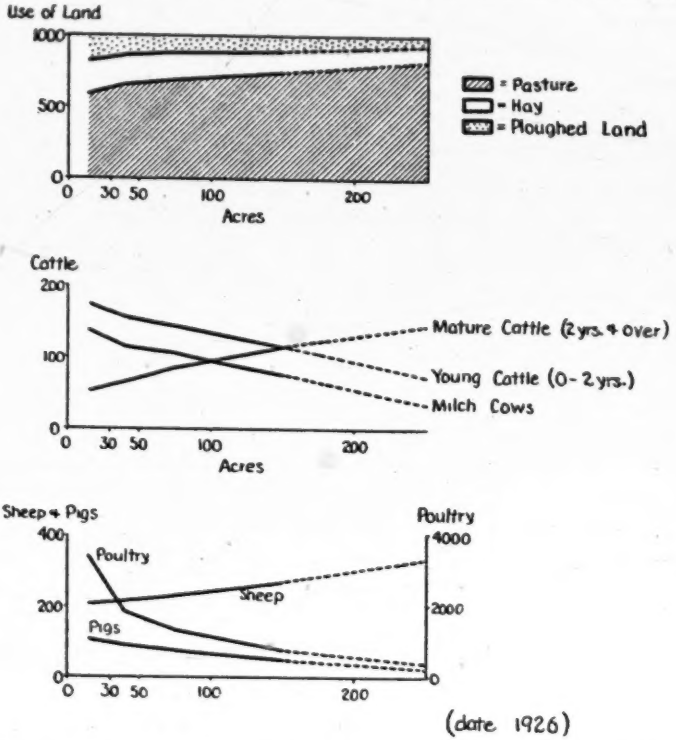
that of the large farms. The latter, especially in the midland counties, where they are most numerous, raise little more than beef cattle. Their owners are the graziers or

FIGURE 1

PRODUCTION ON LARGE AND SMALL HOLDINGS, ALL IRELAND, 1926 CENSUS



(date 1926)

"ranchers" of current political controversy in Ireland. The different economies express themselves in the census as follows:

The numbers of acres ploughed and the numbers under hay per 1000 acres of agricultural land decrease continuously as the size of the holdings increases; the numbers of milch cows, of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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young cattle, of pigs, and of poultry also decrease but the number of dry older cattle and of sheep per 1000 acres increase as the size of the holdings increases. The contrast between the smallest and the largest holdings is exceedingly great and is very great even between the second smallest and second largest. Contrasting the holdings 30–50 acres with holdings 100–200 acres the table shows that on equal areas of agricultural land, the smaller holdings have 32% more ploughed land, 29% more hay, 54% more milch cows, 53% more cattle under one year, 16% more cattle one to two years old, and 9% more cattle of all kinds, 80% more pigs, and 139% more poultry than the holdings 100–200 acres, but the latter have 24% more sheep, 52% more dry cattle, 2 to 3 years old, and 209% more dry cattle 3 years old or over than do holdings 30–50 acres.[2]

In County Clare, the area of our investigation, agriculture presents much the same character and the same difference between small and large farmers as does the whole of Ireland. Clare occupies a middle place among the counties; neither the large nor the small farm predominates. Almost always the small farmer has a garden in potatoes and cabbage with a few oats and turnips and perhaps some rye. The rest of his land will be under several meadows in hay, grazed during the winter months and in fields (pasture land) grazed during both summer and winter, if sheltered. In rough mountain areas sheep are common, particularly in the Broadford and Tubber districts. In addition to cattle, the smaller holder generally has a large flock of ducks, geese, and hens, and he keeps several pigs. These are also fed upon the oats, potatoes, cabbage, and milk left over after the other livestock have been fed. Specialization in poultry raising is still rare, though poultry stations are being established here and there under the supervision of agents of the Department of Agriculture. Certain areas, of course, show minor specializations, such as Miltown Malbay, a seacoast region known for its cabbage, and Newquay, known

[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, Report and Tables* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. xxi.

for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted to one crop.

With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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them with holdings in other parts of the country when in the latter much mountain land is included. The valuations, however, are exceedingly high, the full valuation of the Ennis district (which includes the Fergus plain) being £67,000 for 112,000 acres compared with the neighboring Killadysert district at £25,000 for 62,000 acres.

The second of the "ranching districts" or areas of large holdings practicing this type of agriculture is the region in the northern part of the county called "the hills of Burren" (the Ballyvaughan area). This is a limestone country which provides rich winterage for cattle. Consequently land there is very valuable to the rancher who has to winter his store cattle. Grass grows there fairly richly throughout the winter among the limestone crags, and the cattle are allowed to forage for themselves. In several cases, farmers own large holdings of 200 acres and over in each of the two areas. They drive their cattle down from the winterages in April and back again in November.

Certain other farms of large size, and especially in rich alluvial areas such as Clarecastle and Newmarket-on-Fergus, make extensive use of tillage, primarily of oats. In other areas such as Tubber, Broadford, and Feakle, mountain land is given over to sheep.

County Clare, in fact, shows a fourfold division into sections differentiated partly geographically, partly by the different utilization of the soil. "West Clare" includes all the peninsula west and south of the ridge culminating in Mount Callan and cutting off the Fergus drainage from the Atlantic. Here the holdings are predominantly small, and the more generalized economy is common. "North Clare" covers the country of the "hills of Burren." "East Clare" contains both the rough country of Feakle and Broadford, where small mountain holdings approximate the conditions of West Clare, and the Tulla and Quin districts, which with "Mid-Clare" and "South Clare" cover the alluvial plain of the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Fergus River, where there are many "ranches" and, in parts, extensive oats tillage.

Statistics are available only for the whole of Clare; they give a comprehensive view of the county's farming.[3] All but 21.6 per cent of the population of 95,064 lived in country districts. The area they worked, 787,768 acres, was divided into 15,857 holdings, of which 1,179 did not exceed one acre, 909 contained from 1 to 5, 841 from 5 to 10, 1,108 from 10 to 15, and 3,767 from 15 to 30, 3,617 from 30 to 50, and 3,135 from 50 to 100. The farms larger than 100 acres numbered 997 in the 100 to 200 acre group, and 394 exceeding 200 acres. Clare thus fell into a category among counties in which medium-sized holdings were normal, but both the small farms and the large rancher type were present.

We have no separate statistics for Clare's produce, but we know that in June 1932 the land was being utilized in the following manner. There were only 465 acres of wheat, 335 acres of barley, 207 acres of rye, 1 acre of beans and peas, 147 acres of fruit, 3 acres of sugar beet, 57 acres of experimental ensilage for cattle, and 151 acres of miscellaneous root and green crops. The figures[4] show the small part played by vegetable products other than cabbage and potatoes used for human food. Bread, the great staple, was of course, made from imported flour or wheat. Potatoes and oats, however, made a better showing, with 13,518 and 8,199 acres respectively devoted to them. Turnips and mangels accounted for 3,897 and 306 acres respectively; like potatoes and oats, they are used for both human and animal consumption. This was the extent of ploughed land.

The great bulk of the area was, of course, in hay and pasture. There were 2,791 acres of first-year hay, 131,429 acres of other hay, and 394,791 acres of pasture.

[3] Figures taken from Annual Report, County Clare Council Agricultural Committee. June 1932.

[4] Report of the County Clare Agricultural Committee, 1932.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER II

Small Farm Economy

THE small farmers' family groups inhabit the holdings or plots of land from which they make the livelihood we have described numerically. Except in a few and special cases, there is no physical separation of house plot from fields; the individual family's plot is usually a continuous one, and the other forms of settlement present in Ireland are rapidly being reshaped with that condition as the ideal. Consequently, the farmhouse is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. In it the farm family group spends its entire life, sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work upon the fields.

The farm family lives and performs almost all of its work within this spatial unit of land and house. And the unit is identified with the family in the eyes of its community in name and ownership. Outside this range, the farmer has little participation in affairs in comparison with others of the population. His wife and children have even less. Within this range most of the activity marking the relations of the human beings who make up the group takes place.

The "land," as we have seen, is usually divided into "field," "meadow," "garden," "bog," and "mountain," according to its character and agricultural use. These divisions make up the holding and represent the productive

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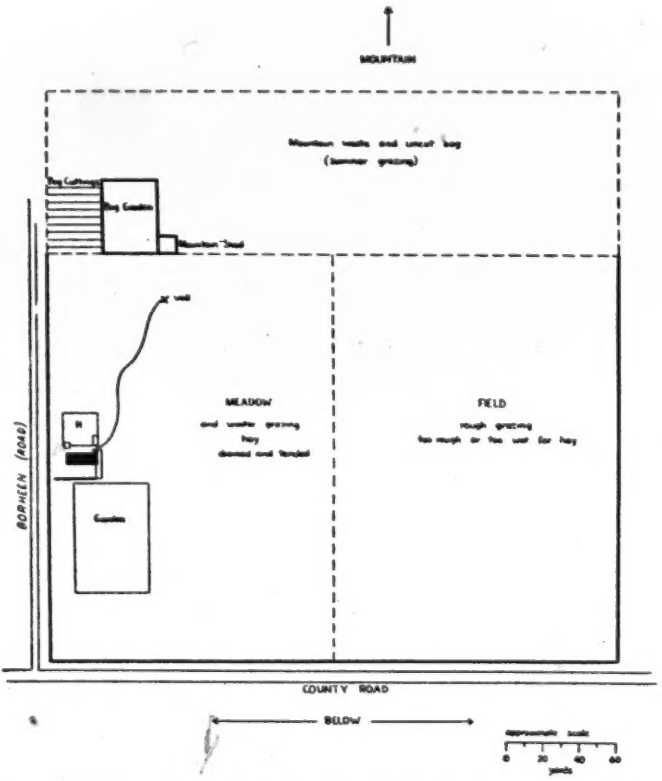
FIGURE 8

Diagrammatic Scheme
of Small Farm
LUOGH
10 ACRES



Schematic representation (not to scale) of composite Clare farm of about five to fifty acres.

[p. 32]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use.

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later.

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called "all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area.

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is carefully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general plan for all such houses of small farmers.

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various

[text continues on p. 35]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half. This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round the lake.

The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are scattered through the fields and across the lake. These households and a few more a little further off make up the community. These are small farms of the kind we met in Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all related one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

132 The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to 251 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual 231 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

234 Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten cows" is still a familiar term.

● 311 241 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less

than 30 statute acres is regarded as small, one of from 30 to 100 acres as of medium size and one of over 100 acres as large. Small, medium and large farms may be found in all parts of Ireland, but in the provinces of Leinster and Munster and in parts of south east Connaught there is a preponderance of medium sized farms with, especially in north Leinster, a considerable proportion of large farms.[1] All this area practises mixed farming, but the south western province, Munster, is completely dominated by the milking cow, while in Leinster the northern half is mainly devoted to the raising of beef cattle, and the southern half produces considerable quantities of wheat, oats and barley.[2] In most areas of Connaught and Ulster, the western and northern provinces, the average farm is of small size, and the number of cows kept by each farmer correspondingly small; the value and productivity of these small farms, however, vary greatly from the intensive cultivation of many farms in east and south Ulster to the fisher-farmer economy of the west coastal districts.[3]

Throughout the provinces of Leinster and Munster, and in parts of east Connaught, that is to say, generally in the area of medium and large farms, the predominant, and in many districts exclusive, farmyard type is the courtyard, in which the dwelling house and outhouses are arranged about a rectangular space which is the farmyard proper. Most usually the buildings form three sides of the yard, with the dwelling house forming one side and the outhouses forming two more, the fourth side being closed by a wall with a gate. Usually the building is not continuous, the elements being separate and connected by walls, or having gateways or passages between them. The size and arrangement of the yard and the various buildings vary from one farm to another, and also from district to district; the general type is, however, well established, and conforms to a pattern which is clearly distinguished from the other types to be described later. In many districts the front of the dwelling house faces the farmyard, thus, in Co. Kildare in 1807: "The farmhouses in general consist of a long thatched building of one storey, consisting of a large kitchen and fireplace in the centre, and lodging rooms at either end; the front door looks to the barns and stables on the right, behind which is the haggard, and on the left are placed the cow and bullock houses." This, written a century and a half ago,[4] exactly describes many of the farmyards of to-day, for example that shown in fig. 1, which has the dwelling house in the middle, the cowhouse, calf-house and a small store (formerly a dairy) on the left, with the manure heap behind them, while on the right are the stable, another store and the pigstye, with the haggard, where the hay and corn stacks are made, behind them. The fourth side is formed by a stone wall, with a gate; this wall fronts on the public roadway. This farmyard is at Duncormick, Co. Wexford, in the south east corner of Ireland, but similar examples may be found in almost every part of the east and south. Figure 2 shows the buildings on a larger farm, also in Co. Wexford. Here the entrance gate leads in between a cart shed on the right and the dairy on the left, with the pump close by. Facing the dwelling house across the yard are the stable and byre and a store, while the corn barn opens into the haggard. The pigsty and manure heap are in the part of the yard most distant from the dwelling house. The openings between the various buildings are closed by stone walls about

[Text continues on p. 12]

[1] Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1930.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] FREEMAN, T. W.: Ireland, Its Physical, Historical, Social and Economic Geography, 1950, chapters VIII and XVIII to XXIII.

[4] RAWSON, T. J.: Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare, 1807, 14–15.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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FIG. 1—Panoramic view of dispersed farmsteads near Carrinure, County Armagh, looking west along the drumlin belt of north Ireland. (Photograph by J. K. St. Joseph, from Cambridge University Collection. British Crown Copyright Reserved.)

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McCourt[5] has been able to map the distribution of relicts of clachan settlement as they were to be found in the 1830's. He has shown that this was a widespread form of settlement in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century, and that it did not disappear in the remoter parts of the country until late in the nineteenth.[6] Indeed, occasional clachans that are still actively functioning can be found today on the Atlantic seaboard (Figs. 2 and 3[7]).

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Associated with clachan settlement was a form of open-field cultivation, comparable to the Scottish infield-outfield system and generally known in

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[5] D. McCourt: The Rundale System in Ireland: A Study of Its Geographical Distribution and Social Relations (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1950).

[6] D. McCourt: Traditions of Rundale in and around the Sperrin Mountains, *Ulster Journ. of Archæol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 16, 1953, pp. 69–84; *idem*: The Rundale System in Donegal: Its Distribution and Decline, *Journ. County Donegal Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1955, pp. 47–60.

[7] The author thanks Captain C. Ó Danachair of the Irish Folklore Commission for drawing his attention to the photograph presented as Figure 3.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Ireland as "rundale" or "runrig."[8] Under rundale the land surrounding a settlement was worked as a joint farm, with individual plots and strips scattered through the arable land, some on the constantly tilled infield and some on shifting outfield patches reclaimed periodically from the waste.[9] By the early nineteenth century this form of agriculture had become extremely complicated, as a result of the rapidly increasing population and of the Irish practice of subdividing a restricted amount of arable land among all the male heirs of the household. In modern surviving examples the clachan and cultivation in rundale are closely interrelated, and it is generally assumed that they do not function independently. But a complication to this interpretation has emerged in a small area of County Down that has been examined by R. H. Buchanan[10] within the limits set by the available manuscript material. Here a set of estate maps shows clachans apparently developed in association with compact holdings. Although this work, which refers to a small area and uses a narrow range of information, may not weaken the great body of evidence that suggests a direct relationship between rundale agriculture and clachan settlement, at least it indicates that the relationship needs to be carefully appraised in each individual case.

Two Nineteenth-Century Investigators

Although changes in the pattern of Irish rural settlement have only recently been uncovered by research, the periodic reports of the various Royal Commissions concerned with nineteenth-century Ireland make it clear that the inhabitants of the country were not unaware of the changes taking place around them.[11] Hence it is not surprising that at least two nineteenth-century scholars, Frederic Seebohm and August Meitzen, knew of clachan settlement.

Seebohm's attention was focused on the manorial and tribal systems and on the open-field system of cultivation.[12] It was this latter interest in particular

[8] D. McCourt: Infield and Outfield in Ireland, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 7, 1954–1955, pp. 369–376.

[9] Flatrès believes that the outfield was not widely found in Ireland but was a late introduction, brought in the early seventeenth century by Scottish settlers (Pierre Flatrès: Géographie rurale de quatre contrées celtiques—Irlande, Galles, Cornwall & Man [Rennes, 1957]). No attempt has been made here to evaluate Flatrès' ambitious study, of particular interest, however, is his map of the modern field systems of Ireland (Fig. 1). [Reviewed in this number of the *Geographical Review*, p. 599.—Edit. Note.]

[10] The author is grateful to Mr. Buchanan for this information in advance of its publication.

[11] In particular see the evidence presented to the Devon Commission (Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry [Lord Devon, Chairman] into . . . the Occupation of Land in Ireland [6 parts (in 5 vols.), London, 1845; British Parliamentary Papers 1845, XIX–XXIII]).

[12] Frederic Seebohm: The English Village Community, Examined in Its Relations to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry (2nd edit., London, 1883).

[Text continues on p. 558]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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FIG. 2—Ballyhillin, a present-day clachan near Malin Head, County Donegal.

FIG. 3—Kiltullagh, a hamlet of a form common in County Galway. The regularity in the arrangement of the houses is possibly the result of the activity of a former landlord, though it is noticeable that the houses are not perfectly oriented to the road. (Photograph from Irish Press.)

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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114 311 361 that led him to pay some attention to the arrangement of settlement on the land. At first sight he does not seem to have been aware of the existence of clachans in Ireland, since he states that under the tribal system homesteads "were scattered over the country and not grouped together in villages and towns," and he seems to suggest that the dispersed settlement of nineteenth-century Ireland was a product of this heritage.[13] But elsewhere in the same work he points out that homesteads were in fact grouped in "arithmetical clusters" which were "the natural method by which the frequent redistributions of the land were made easy; while the runrig form of open-field system was the natural mode of conducting a cooperative and shifting agriculture"[14] —a recognizable description of settlement in clachans. This apparent contradiction must have been produced merely by the lack of a definition of what is meant by the term "village." A clachan was just a group of farm buildings, usually without any other function and without any plan, and hence it would not have appeared "village-like" to an Englishman's eyes, though its total population could have approached that of a village in lowland Britain. Unfortunately, Seebohm's conclusions on Irish settlement cannot be accepted at their face value. Although the form of settlement he describes may have been found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the period from which he drew his information—it does not follow that these conditions represented the form of settlement associated with the original tribal system, as he suggests. However, at least he was aware that the clachan existed in early-nineteenth-century Ireland.

To geographers Meitzen's work is perhaps better known.[15] His assertion that settlement in isolated farms (*Einzelhöfe*) could be traced back to the mode of a Celtic ethnic group has been criticized on the broad European evidence, but in spite of this he was not unaware of the presence of clachans in Ireland. In the atlas that forms part of his great work (perhaps its most valuable part for modern geographers) several plates derived from nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps illustrate clachans and the open fields associated with them.[16] Although he drew much of his information from Seebohm, Meitzen could not accept the theory that clachans originated in Celtic or pre-Celtic time; however, his alternative explanations are unconvincing. It is hard to believe that this settlement form was introduced into Scotland by Scandinavian influence or that in Ireland it was transitional between pastoral

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 223–244.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[15] Meitzen, *op. cit.* [see footnote 2 above].
[16] *Ibid.*, Atlas to Vol. 3, maps 23 and 25–27.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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and arable use of land.[17] Further, Meitzen does not seem to have been aware of the widespread distribution of the clachan and its associated field system. In fairness, however, it should be pointed out that Meitzen was not entirely wrong. Recent work suggests that Celtic freemen in Ireland lived in dispersed farmsteads (known to archeologists as "raths"),[18] though this does not establish that modern dispersed settlement was directly derived from such a heritage, particularly in view of the unsettled history of Ireland during the intervening period.

A Problem in Origins

Moreover, the two forms of settlement—*Einzelhöfe* and clachans—are not necessarily incompatible. Both McCourt and Evans have commented on the way in which clachans wax and wane,[19] largely because of fluctuations in population numbers. Indeed, McCourt cites at least one example from County Antrim in which an individual farm grew into a clachan between 1782 and 1832, and two of the clachans Evans studied in Donegal dissolved into isolated farms sometime between 1834 and 1902.[20]

The problem here seems to be one of origin. Did the clachan bring the infield-outfield system with it, or were the two separate at this earliest stage? If they were separate, it would suggest that their modern survival together on the Atlantic fringe of Ireland may be the result of the independent preservation of ancient practices in a difficult region. For that matter, was the clachan introduced? Examples have already been given of the growth of nucleated settlements from dispersed farmsteads, often in a very short time, and in view of the clachan's lack of plan this manner of origin seems entirely reasonable.

On the other hand, merely to say that the settlement pattern and the field system grew out of the subdivision of a larger enclosed farm is to oversimplify the problem. Meitzen postulated a Celtic people with a tradition of compact farms; but if subdivision took place, surely it would have been a break with that tradition to produce small farms with scattered strips rather

[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 207–218.

[18] V. B. Proudfoot: The People of the Forths, *Ulster Folklife*, Vol. 1, 1955, pp. 19–26. See also his "Settlement and Economy in Co. Down from the Late Bronze Age to the Anglo-Norman Invasion" (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1957).

[19] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 28.

[20] McCourt, The Rundale System in Ireland [see footnote 5 above], diagram 27; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 29; E. E. Evans: The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe, *in* Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, edited by W. L. Thomas, Jr. (Chicago, 1956), pp. 217–239, reference on p. 231.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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than small compact holdings. A further indication that there may have been a fundamental distinction between the systems which is not apparent at first sight lies in the fact that, wherever the historical record goes back continuously into the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, both settlement forms are found to have existed side by side in the same areas and over the whole period.[21] No case is yet known in which an area with nothing but dispersed farms was converted into an area where clachans were completely dominant. Hence, drawing an analogy from Wales, where G. R. J. Jones[22] has carefully examined more plentiful medieval documents than have survived in Ireland, Evans has been led to suggest that the dispersed Iron Age farms (the "raths" referred to above) were the homes of freemen; and bondmen, the descendants of pre-Celtic inhabitants, lived in clachans. Later, in historical time, both groups fell under the control of landlords, but remnants of the former situation survived in the settlement pattern.[23] Some confirmation of this theory has come from Proudfoot's work in County Down, where he has been able to show that raths were not the only form of settlement during the Dark Ages; there were also groups of farms without an enclosing bank, which could be dated to the same period.[24] Such an interpretation regards clachan settlement as being of great antiquity, and indeed it is hard to believe that the cooperative kinship unit (which life in a clachan implies) is other than of considerable age. Further, it suggests that the fundamental antithesis was between systems of landholding, rather than between settlement patterns.

The infield-outfield system also seems to have been an early introduction. It could be suggested, of course, that the system represented an adaptation of the medieval three-field system to the small amount of good arable land available in many parts of Ireland. Medieval agriculture on an English pattern had been introduced into southeastern Ireland by the Normans; and a medieval origin has been suggested for some villages in Wexford, formed of groups of strip farms, which were still functioning in the nineteenth century.[25] But even if this can be firmly established, the Norman influence on agriculture was limited to the southeastern part of the country. In any case, the modern

[21] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376.

[22] G. R. J. Jones: Some Medieval Rural Settlements in North Wales, *Inst. of British Geogrs. Publ. No. 19: Trans. and Papers 1953*, London, 1954, pp. 51–72.

[23] Evans, The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe [see footnote 20 above], p. 231. Earlier, Duignan had tentatively suggested a similar idea but did not relate it to the development of settlement patterns (M. Duignan: Irish Agriculture in Early Historic Times. *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 124–145; reference on p. 129).

[24] Proudfoot, Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above].

[25] J. Otway-Ruthven: The Origin of Anglo-Irish Agriculture in the Middle Ages, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 81, 1951, pp. 1–13; reference on p. 6.

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survivals of the infield-outfield system in the remoter parts of Ireland would seem to suggest that it dates from a time much earlier than that of the Norman invasion.

Lines of Investigation

These questions and theories widen the field for speculation, but it is difficult to see where to turn for further information, largely because of the meager documentary evidence that survives in Ireland from periods earlier than the eighteenth century. Admittedly, relevant material may be discovered among estate papers, but there are three other lines that might be followed with profit.

One possible approach, field investigation, is illustrated by a project now under way, in which archeological techniques are being used to excavate a clachan in County Down, inhabited until the late nineteenth century. The primary aim is to discover how this particular clachan originated. Did it grow out of a single farm, and, if so, at what date? Two seasons' work has now been completed without conclusive answers to these questions, though some details have been added to the local economic history of County Down.[26] At least it has been shown that a clachan settlement stood on this site about 1780 and that the site had been occupied from sometime near the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Buildings were found underlying the nineteenth-century structures. The fact that some of these remains appear to date from a time before the immigration of Scottish and English settlers into the area in the early seventeenth century should prove important in the study of Irish house types, since the lack of evidence on the development of settlement patterns extends also to the history of individual farm buildings.[27]

Whether this particular excavation will yield further information about

[26] J. H. Johnson, V. B. Proudfoot, and R. H. Buchanan: Excavations at Minerstown, Co. Down: Preliminary Report on Work Completed in 1956, *Ulster Journ. of Archæol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 21, 1958. (In press.)

[27] Pioneer work on surviving house types was carried out by A. Campbell (Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture, *Béaloideas*, Vol. 5, 1935, pp. 57–74; Notes on the Irish House, *Folkliv*, Vol. 1, 1937, pp. 207–234, and Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 173–196). This has been developed in a series of local studies, so that a comprehensive account of the surviving forms of Irish traditional building is becoming increasingly possible. The best and most recent general account is E. E. Evans' "Irish Folk Ways" (London, 1957; with an extensive bibliography), Chapters 4 and 5. Several important articles on house types and related topics have appeared recently; for example, C. Ó Danachair: Irish Farmyard Types, *Arctica: Studia Ethnographia Upsaliensis No. 11*, 1956, pp. 6–15; A. T. Lucas: Wattle and Straw-Mat Doors in Ireland, *ibid.*, pp. 16–35; C. Ó Danachair: Stand und Aufgaben der Hausforschung in Irland, *Bericht über die Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für Deutsche Hausforschung*, Schleswig, 1955, pp. 29–50; R. H. Buchanan: Thatch and Thatching in North-East Ireland, *Gwerin*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 123–142; and C. Ó Danachair: The Bed Out-Shot in Ireland, *Folkliv*, Vols. 19–20, 1955–1956, pp. 26–31.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the beginning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered. However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of landholding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviving clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photographs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

[28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland, *Antiquity*, Vol. 4, 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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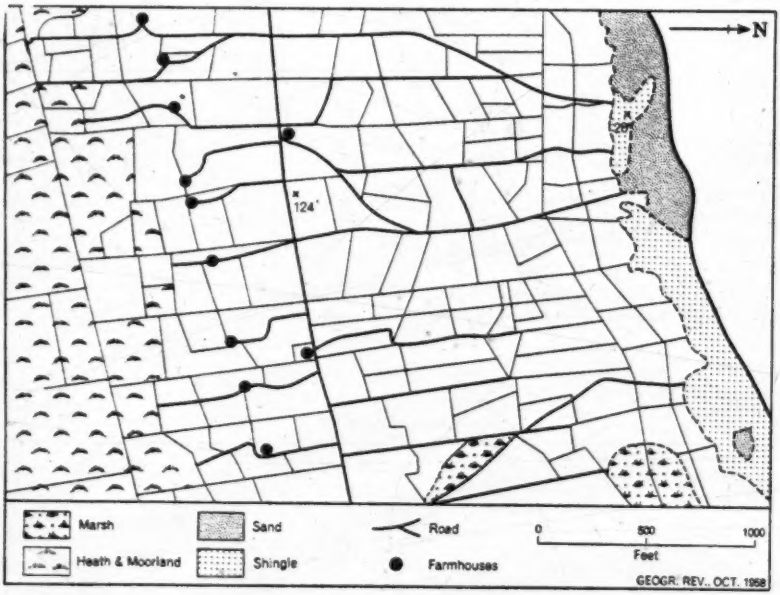

FIG. 4—"Striped" farms and fields in County Kerry. (Based on the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Minister of Finance, Republic of Ireland.)

mentary authorization. Although it is rarely possible to obtain information on the methods and precise date of consolidation, the destruction of the system can be explained, in broad terms, by its growing inefficiency and by the dissemination of new agricultural techniques.

Some of the unsatisfactory aspects of rundale agriculture sprang from the steady growth of the population of Ireland, which continued from sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century until the Great Famine of 1845–1847.[30] This increase led to a constant encroachment on various uncultivated areas, a process in which the general adoption of the potato as a subsistence crop played a major part.[31] But the "waste" lands brought under cultivation had not been completely unused, since often they were grazed by livestock under a well-developed transhumance.[32] This seasonal movement was important to the rural economy, because efficient rundale farming required that the animals be removed from the unfenced cultivated strips during the growing

[30] K. H. Connell: The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845 (Oxford, 1950).

[31] *Idem*: The Colonization of Waste Land in Ireland, 1780–1845, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 3, 1950–1951, pp. 44–71.

[32] J. M. Graham: Transhumance in Ireland, *The Advancement of Sci.*, Vol. 10, 1953–1954, pp. 74–79.

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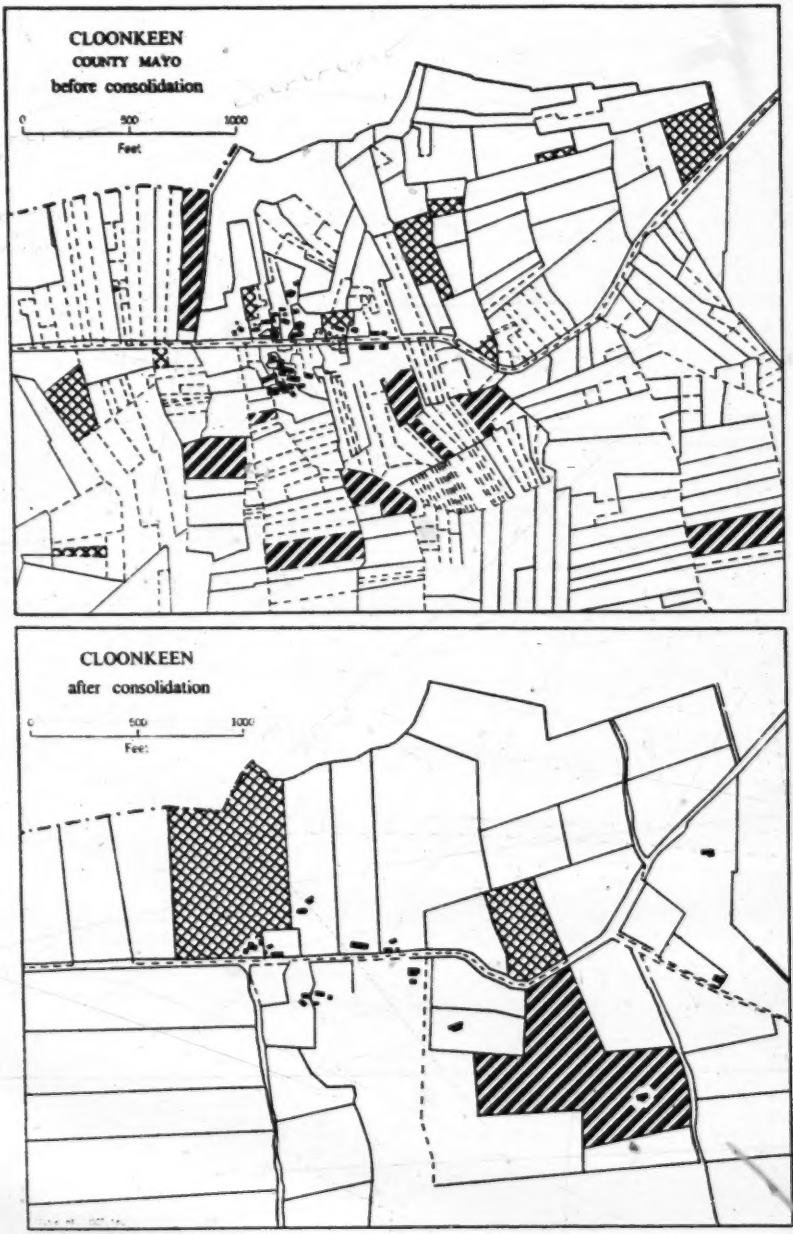

FIG. 5—Cloonkeen, County Mayo, before and after consolidation. The two different shadings (crosshatch and diagonal ruling) represent land held by two typical farmers before and after the consolidation carried out in 1909 by the Congested Districts Board. (Based on information kindly provided by the Irish Land Commission and reproduced by permission.)

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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season; and the end of transhumance made the working of the system more difficult. Similarly, the increase of population led to a remarkable growth in the size of many clachans, which often made life in them increasingly inconvenient. Squabbles over rights of way and other petty affairs were common, and there was a growing awareness that the old methods of farming were becoming unsatisfactory. The introduction of new crops and rotations gave the *coup de grâce* to the efficiency of the system; for they were difficult to integrate into it, and therefore agricultural improvement was retarded.

The impetus behind the changes, however, usually did not come from the farmers themselves but from their landlords. Indeed, it seems possible that peasant resistance to the destruction of rundale was a considerable factor in nineteenth-century opposition to landlordism.[33] Often landlords, intent on improving their estates, would put whole areas of land into the melting pot, consolidating holdings and sometimes evicting the surplus population. Frequently the new holdings were arranged up and down the slope of the land, an arrangement that has resulted in the characteristic striped appearance of much of the modern Irish landscape. Although long, narrow strips were probably not the best possible farm shape (Fig. 4), they represented a compromise between the traditional system of allocating each farmer a share of every quality of land and the landlords' demands for greater efficiency. At the same time the old clachan groups were broken up and new farmhouses were built, each within its own land. In such a way most of the better agricultural land was converted, but at the end of the nineteenth century various areas, particularly in the west of Ireland, still remained under the old system or some modification of it. This hard core has now been largely eliminated by government action. First the British government attempted a general improvement of living conditions in western Ireland by means of the Congested Districts Board, whose work included the reorganization of agricultural holdings (Fig. 5);[34] after 1922 and the establishment of the Irish Free State the task was taken over by the Irish Land Commission.[35]

In some areas, however, the disappearance of clachan settlement was part of a natural process in the late nineteenth century. The population of Ireland started to decrease after the Great Famine of the 1840's, and even in areas where there had been little rearrangement of holdings some clachans became

[33] See, for example, the Devon Commission Report [see footnote 11 above], Part 1, Appendix 14, p. 58.

[34] T. W. Freeman: The Congested Districts of Western Ireland. *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 33, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[35] On this aspect of the Land Commission's work see "The Consolidation of Fragmented Agricultural Holdings" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Washington, 1950), Chapter 3, "Relief of Rural Congestion in Ireland."

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus of the countryman's way of life.

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the small farmer's family lives upon the holding it works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them.

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, it is natural that this unit should be known and judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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311 tain', and wherever possible, it includes a 'bit of
231 bog' for 'turf' for the year's fuel. When a small
592 farmer tells you he 'has the place of four cows' he sums up this sort of farm, judging it for its ability to support himself and his family in the country manner and to give pasture to four milch cows. In the phrase he epitomizes rural economy.

592 Ordinarily the house opens directly into the
361 'haggard', as the farmyard is called. There in the haggard are the cabins in which cattle are housed and the various sheds and stalls, often built into the masonry of the house itself. In them, farm machines, tools and carts are kept and crops and seed are stored. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are housed there, and in one of the sheds pig or pigs find their quarters. The winter's supply of fodder stands there in the form of the great hayrick. The straw-covered pit of turnips and mangels, not far away, will serve for men and cattle; and the turf-rick is near at hand. As for the house itself we have already looked inside, in our search for the 'west room'.

592 The family with which this unit is associated centres its activity round house and haggard. Even for the men, whose work lies primarily in field, garden and meadow, work centres round the house for a good part of the year. If I give you a sketch of this activity as my co-workers and I saw it day after day in several rural communities in Clare, I hope to throw its general features into relief.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER III.

THE LANDSCAPE.

THE BEGINNINGS.

133 The landscape of a long inhabited country like Ireland is
137 in large measure the work of man, whose farms, fields and
● 311 fences are the result of many centuries of sustained effort. One might think of the wild thorn hedges and the piled stone "ditches" as mere sample remnants of woods and stones that once covered the face of the land. The extent of the change brought about may be judged by the fact that from being a land clothed with forest from the sea-coasts high up into the mountains, Ireland to-day is the least wooded country in Europe. In this work of forest destruction man has been assisted by his domestic animals and by changes of climate which have resulted in the accumulation of bogland. It is one of the paradoxes of Ireland that while the main lines of her mountains took shape in the remote ages of geological time, wide areas are dominated by the peat deposits which have been formed in the few thousand years that have elapsed since the ice age. The contrast of age is accentuated by those of colour and relief, for far across the level brown bogs rise blue in the distance some of the oldest mountains in Europe. In the middle distance, completing the picture, will be the green hills of the eskers.

137 The heart of the island, the Irish midlands, is a veritable Black Country, black with peat, not with the grime of coal-fields. Here in the boglands there are twelve contiguous

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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winters—all these characteristics are related to the eastward moving stream of cyclones coming off the warm North Atlantic drift. Rain is heaviest wherever mountain masses place obstacles in the path of the moisture-bearing winds, and the peninsulas of Donegal, Connemara and Kerry have from 60 to 100 inches of rain each year (Fig. 8). By contrast the east coast gets about half this amount, while the low-lying tract between Dublin and Drogheda is favoured by a fall of under 30 ins. Everywhere the mildness and the damp encourage grasses and moisture-loving plants, but too often waterlogging has caused green pastures and woodlands to deteriorate into brown bogland. The prolonged autumns, another gift of the Atlantic, are important because they give man a sporting chance of saving his harvests: the heaviest rains are delayed until November and December. Similarly the relatively dry springs (March-May) are conducive to work in field and turf-bog at that season. (Chapter 15).

Reviewing the distribution of the chief crops and animals to-day, the following facts may be noted. Nearly one half the land devoted to crops, excluding hay, is occupied by oats and perhaps three-quarters of the yield is fed to livestock. Only in the wettest peninsulas of Connemara and Kerry does another crop (potatoes) occupy more land. It is estimated that the "consumption" of potatoes amounts to about ½ ton per head of the population each year, but the greater part of this goes to pigs and other livestock. The greatest concentration of wheat production is in the comparatively sunny corner of Wexford, with secondary areas along the dry east coast in Cos. Dublin and Down. Recent years have witnessed an increase in wheat growing but there is still far less than in the record years of a century ago. when wheat was being exported to England. Barley, which is more intolerant of damp than wheat, is found on the well-drained soils of Co. Louth but particularly of Wexford and the sheltered valleys of the Nore, Suir and Barrow. It has declined less than wheat because of the demand of the breweries and distilleries, but the drop in the illicit making of poteen has reduced its production in many a secluded spot along the west coast.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their importance in the past: one minor factor in the decline is the fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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bound by innumerable ties to a countryside richer and fuller than that of to-day. Thus birch, rowan, hazel, thorn, sally and holly all had their special purposes, and yew was in great demand for croziers and shrines. So we might go on down to the humblest lichen (for crottle dye) and the seaweed (Chapter 16). Bog timber, oak and "fir," had many uses—for furniture and implements, for roofs, gates, slide-cars and boat-timber as well as for fir ropes and lighting "splits." Superstitious customs are associated with several of the native trees, especially the rowan, the ash, hazel and whitethorn (Chap. 18).

Sycamore and beech, neither of them native to Ireland, have been extensively planted in recent centuries and grow so well that many have assumed them to be indigenous. The beech loves the well-drained moraines, while the sycamore, one of the few trees which will stand up to the full force of the salt-laden winds, is planted in coastal districts for the shelter it provides: behind its dense summer foliage many a low cabin lies hidden. Its white easily-worked timber is sought by the wood-turner. Formerly the beetling engines of the linen country made a demand for beech and sycamore—the former for the beaters and the latter for the great beam. On steep hillsides which man has been unable to utilize one may still see patches of what may be regarded as wild scrub, a tangle of hazel, ash, black and white thorn, or birch, rowan and alder; but apart from the high-walled demesnes where giant trees are allowed to grow old and rot, the Irish landscape is singularly bare of timber. Visitors from England will notice the poor development of hedgerow trees except for the ash of Co. Meath. This must be attributed largely to the fact that hedge trees have to grow in raised banks or "ditches," as they are called. Hedges and trees are very rarely planted on the level, for the ditch-tradition is older than the hedge. To quote Young once more: "I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks." But there is some compensation, in autumn, in the wealth of blackberries which they produce (Fig. 10).

Travellers of the early 19th century constantly refer to landscapes without a single tree or shrub or any trace of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Fig. 10.

hedgerows. It is hard to realize that the close-set pattern of hedged or walled fields which now distinguishes so much of the countryside is for the most part only a century or so old. In many cases it can be shown that the fields and fences were laid out within the last hundred years, following the break-up of the rundale village system and the re-distribution of the land (Chapter 6). In the eastern lowlands, where English influence has long been at work, the field pattern and hedgerows are no doubt much older, but in general the small cultivated patches were separated by mere balks or waste strips, varying from one to ten feet in width. Stones from the fields, hand-picked or removed with crow-bar and slipe (Chapter 12) were dumped on the balks or, more frequently, piled into " cairns " in the middle of the fields. Such stone-heaps are often found accompanying prehistoric field-systems, for example in Jutland.

Stone walls or high earthen fences surrounded the house-clusters and enclosed each group of open fields, separating them from the common grazing land which lay outside and stretched away to the " head-ditch " on the mountain. As the rundale holdings gave way to individual farms the land was re-divided, the old ditches planted with whitethorn and new ditches, also set with thorn, were constructed—a process which was being actively carried out during the first half of the 19th century. One result of the scattering of the farms was the appearance of the long strip or " ladder farms," the cross hedges of the strip resembling the rungs of a ladder.

The oldest fences, then, are the protective banks around farms which occupy old village sites—a survival no doubt of the rings around the ancient raths—and the march-dykes or divisions between townlands. The varied vegetation on these older banks betrays them just as it does the pre-enclosure hedgerows in England: their massive tumbled ruins are overgrown with whins, blackthorn, sally, ash and bramble. There are, however, still older forgotten divisions on the hillsides dating from various prehistoric periods; some have

172 311 351 been discovered under many feet of peat. Several types can be recognized, for example those with upright stones at intervals, which are sometimes left as "standing stones" after the intervening walls have been removed. Old field fences at Cush, Co. Limerick, claimed to be contemporary with raths of the late Bronze Age and "essentially similar to those built by an Irish farmer of to-day" have been described by Professor O'Riordain. This appears to be a striking example of continuity, for the fences are closely followed by existing field-boundaries. Since they lie some 800 ft. above sea-level they do not invalidate the general picture I shall draw in the following chapter, but it is clear that much more work on the lines followed at Cush is required.

351 314 137 [231] Hedges of whins (that is, gorse or furze) about the farmstead are much prized not only for the shelter they afford to stock—they are dense and do not drip—but because they form an admirable clothes line on washing day and a ready source of kindling wood. Formerly the young whin shoots were crushed and fed to horses. The heavy wooden maul and stone block used in the process may still be seen occasionally. It would require years of enquiry and observation to describe and classify the types of sod ("scraw") earth and stone fences which now parcel out the Irish soil into its patchwork of small fields. One may easily recognize the sod ditches of the rich grazing lands of Meath, with their tall thorn hedges and ash trees giving shelter to the cattle, the well-built dry-stone walls of the granite mountain slopes which vainly seek to stop the black-faced sheep, and the loose lace-like walls precariously constructed out of rough boulders in the morainic hills.

351 311 137 In the wind-swept mountains and along the coasts the ditches are hedgeless, carrying only a tangle of heather or whins and an occasional stunted tree, but throughout the lowlands the prevailing type of fence is a stone-faced bank of sods, in the side of which quick-thorn is planted (Fig. 10). These are cut back ruthlessly at longish intervals and are never pleached in the English way, so that the hedge is full of gaps. Occasion-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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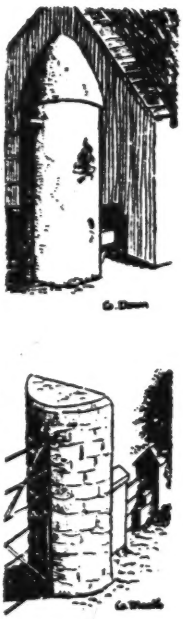
ally one comes across very wide ditches of this type with a double hedge and paths or even cart-tracks in between, for example in Co. Limerick. In Rathlin Island the only hedge material that seems to escape the ravages of goats is the balsam poplar. Another plant of New World origin, born in Scotland of South American parents, is the Fuchsia, which runs riot along the coasts. Basket willows and wild "black sallies" for creels are sometimes grown—the latter has the advantage that it is not cropped by cattle.

The scarcity of good oak timber in a country once famed for its oaks—notice the frequency of the element "derry" in townland names—goes far to explain the prevalence of iron field-gates, which are hung on stout pillars of built stone. The newcomer to Ireland cannot fail to be struck by the massive gateposts along the roadsides and about the farm premises. In many districts they are whitewashed annually, and since they often assume proportions out of all relation to their function they are unnaturally conspicuous in a landscape bare of heavy timber. In parts of Ulster, for instance, they are such a characteristic feature of the countryside that it is difficult to imagine it without their cheering twinned greeting. Yet most of them must have been erected within the last century or so: writers of Irish travels before that time frequently comment on the absence of gates, for which in fact there was very limited need so long as the rundale system of farming persisted (Chapter 6). In the small village-communities of the west where the old scheme still prevails the gaps in the fences that surround the open field are closed with jagged root-stumps dragged from the bogs, or with a few thorn bushes. Sampson, writing of Co. Derry in 1814, states that gates were almost unknown except near towns, and that a common substitute was a hay-rope strung with thorns—an interesting rustic forerunner of the hated barbed wire.



Gate pillars and stiles

Fig. 11.

It might appear from the association of built piers with landlords' residences in Donegal that settlers introduced them to Ireland, but I am far from convinced that this is the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuts. It is customary to replace the sod on the floor of the bog as the face is cut back, so that the rough grazing is preserved. If the sub-soil is suitable, lowland bogs are reclaimed and good cropping land secured for hay and potatoes. In Armagh strawberries, raspberries, currants and rhubarb grow excellently on the peaty soils.

In the mountain bogs of the north-east a variety of push plough known as the flachter—a word derived from the same root as "flay"—cuts off a scraw some six inches thick as it is driven by vigorous thrusts of the thighs against the stout cross-bar (Figs. 83, 84). Unlike the English breast-

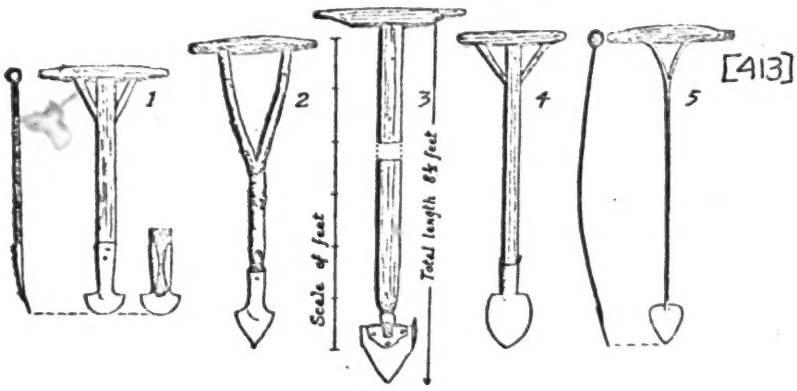


Fig. 85. Flachters.

1. Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim.
2. Glendun, Co. Antrim.
3. Glenravel, Co. Antrim (English type).
4. Co. Tyrone (1802).
5. Tirmeel, Co. Derry (iron shaft).

plough, the blade has no side wing. It is fastened to the shaft by the old-fashioned device of folded flanges which we have already come across in the sock of the wooden plough and in the loy. I illustrate in Fig. 85 some varieties of flachter and, for comparison, a breast-plough of English type from mid-Antrim (centre). In connexion with the short-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:— 162 592

Islands.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
Inishbofin, .	2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark, .	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, . .	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males. 162 167

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons. [142]

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6*s.* A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled 423 311 [495]

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

423 311 to give by the kindness of the proprietor, Cyril Allies, Esq., J. P. :—

Townland.	Area.	Commonage.
	A. R. P.	A. R. P.
Westquarter, ...	493 3 32	349 2 8
Fawnmore, ...	194 1 14	116 1 15
Middlequarter, . . .	612 2 0	375 3 9
Knock, ...	366 1 9	161 3 39
Cloonamore, ...	645 1 1	424 3 29
Inishshark, ...	581 1 12	435 3 12
Islets, ...	257 3 35	—
Total, . . .	3151 3 1	1864 1 32

Taking the available area at 930 acres, and the number of families at 215, the average size of a holding per house is 4·3 acres, with a [435] corresponding average valuation of £2 13*s*. The size of a holding, [427] however, varies from 1A. 3R., at a rent of 14*s*. 6*d*., to 56 acres, at £7. Out of 127, the particulars of which were furnished me by Mr. Allies, there were :—

3	holdings of	1	acre and under	2	acres.
21	,,	2	,,	3	,,
17	,,	3	,,	4	,,
8	,,	4	,,	5	,,
23	,,	5	,,	6	,,
15	,,	6	,,	7	,,
12	,,	7	,,	8	,,
17	,,	8	,,	10	,,
5	,,	10	,,	13	,,
4	,,	13	,,	18	,,
1	holding of	25	acres		
1	,,	56	,,		

It will be observed that most of the holdings in this list are of very small size, only eleven being more than ten acres in extent, and 59 or 46·5 per cent. being under 5 acres.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at, or under, £2. 423 311 [435]

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inishshark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among themselves, but many of the children and young people have little or no acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark, which is less in communication with the outer world than Inishbofin. 191

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. were illiterate :— 212 162

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160 females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65 females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inishbofin.

(d.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were— 145 162

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
,, 80 ,, 85, 5 males and 14 females,
,, 85 ,, 90, 4 ,, 0 ,,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

161 The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and outbuildings was as follows in 1891 :—

Locality.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
The Mullet, .	23,333 1 27	3757	1893	1864	600	532
N. Inishkea, .	464 1 32	126	60	66	21	4
S. Inishkea, .	344 3 19	180	92	88	32	33
23 Islets, . .	350 0 17	48	22	26	10	27
Portacloy, .	7845 1 1	299	148	151	54	29
Totals, . . .	32,338 0 6	410	2215	2195	717 ?	625

423 (B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area of the district is that of
●311 Kilmore, being 29,492 acres, and the three townlands forming the Portacloy district, 7,845 acres.

[435] The total valuation of Kilmore is £4,055 18*s.*, and of Portacloy £163 7*s.*

There is very little commonage in the Mullet, but about Portacloy there is a good deal.

[427] The holdings are not large, averaging about 4½ or 5 acres at a rental of about £3 10*s.* in the Mullet, and about £2 10*s.* in "the mountains." There is considerable variation, however, as there are some farms of good size, but the majority are small.

In 1891 there were, in Kilmore, 210 holdings of between £4 and £10 valuation, 305 of £2 and under £4, and no less than 252 at, or under, £2 valuation.

The land is mostly held now at judicial rentals (the people having early taken advantage of the Land Act of 1881), but sixty years ago the greater part of the land was held in common, and the mode of
175 tenure is thus described by Knight :—"In the whole of the peninsula there are few farms divided . . . the usual system being commonage both in tillage and pasture. In tillage, lots are cast every third year for the number of ridges each person is entitled to after the usual rotation is over. Potatoes the first year, then barley or oats, after which new lots must be cast for new potato ground. The holdings are by sums or collops, which originally meant the number

167 657 landscape combined with financial help of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara [131] (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is separated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring 311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs 132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[3] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

505 Isolation is a major problem, but on four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost [261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport problems [137]

[3] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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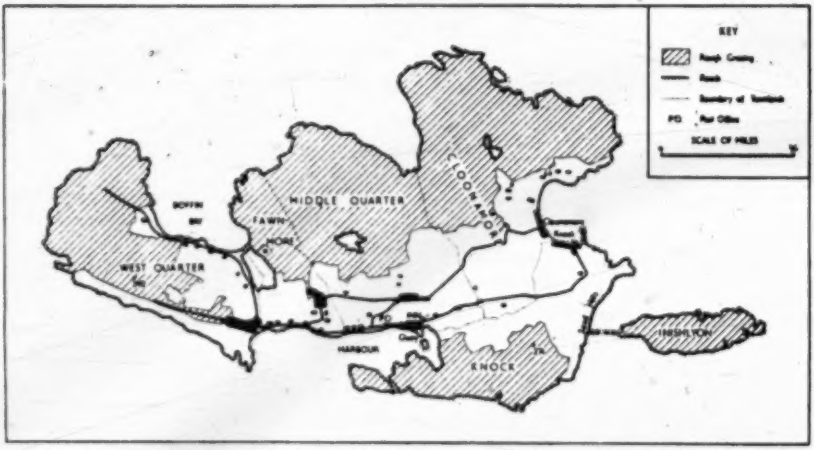

FIG. 1. The townlands of Inishbofin. Inishlyon has no inhabitants, but is used as sheep pasture. Cloonamore and Knock appear as a single line of houses on the shore but are in different townlands. The boundaries of the rough pasture and the distribution of houses were mapped in July, 1954. (Based on Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to 1 mile, Co. Galway, sheet 9, 1898, by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.)

[p. 204(A)]

[p.204(B)]

000 railway was closed in 1925. But the
206 Inishbofin postmistress operates a radio-telephone.

The Landscape

Three types of landscape are char-
133 acteristic: first, craggy hills of no great altitude, with a maximum of 292 feet in Westquarter, 288 feet in Middle-quarter, and 271 feet in Knock; second, the farmed rolling countryside ranging from sea level to about 150 feet, and having some natural drainage; and, third, an area of sand dunes and blown
● [311] sand in the extreme east, once settled and farmed but now used only for rough pasture. The larger of the two lakes, Lough Bofin, is held back by a magnificent shingle ridge in a fine bay, partially protected from strong winds and high seas but open to northerly gales. The coast is rocky almost every-where and there are some splendid cliffs
[504] with outlying stacks: the best harbor is the long inlet on the south side. No recent geological work has been done

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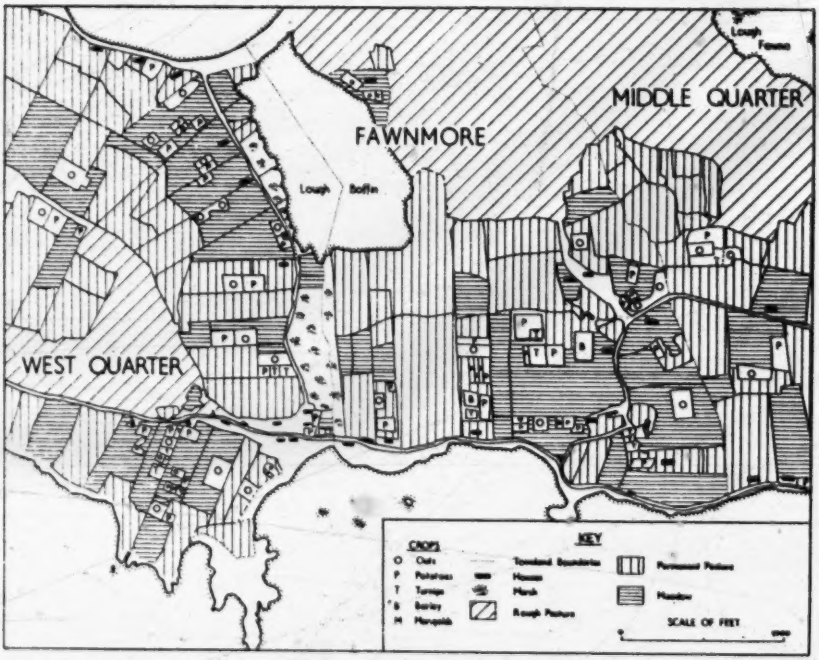

FIG. 2. Land use in part of Inishbofin. The rectangular pattern is characteristic of many areas "striped" by the Congested Districts Board. Small crop "gardens," fields of meadow and improved pasture, exist beside each farmhouse, and roads lead to the "commonage." (Field mapping done by Mr. Clifford Hargreaves, B.A., of the Department of Geography, University of Manchester, in July 1954, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made.)

[p. 205(A)]

[p. 205 (B)]

314 year the feed of a dozen sheep is burnt in the homes."

Agricultural life depends on the use
311 of the "commonage," or rough pasture,
231 and the improved land, which is almost
entirely drift fertilized by seaweed and
632 farmyard manure. Two-thirds of the island's 2480 acres is rough pasture, used for the sheep, cattle, ponies, and donkeys, as well as for peat collection. Figure 1 shows that the island is divided into five townlands, in each of which the commonage is shared, with the result that a farmer may take his animals not to the rough pasture near his holding but to ground as much as a mile away. There is a band of farm lands
311 stretching from lough Bofin to the har-

[p.205(c)]

311 bor, and then with no break to Cloonamore on the east side.

311 This island has a planned landscape. 657 The roads of the commonage pastures and peat bogs have been built under relief schemes and the farms include seven acres of improved land, "striped" or defined by the Congested Districts Board after the land was acquired from its owner, Mr. C. Allies, in 1907.[19] 342 Since then new houses of concrete, with 511 a concrete floor, roofed with asbestos 657 slate or, rarely, ordinary slates, have

[19] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 18th report for the year ending March 31, 1909, Cmd. 4927, p. 139. The price paid was £8301, including £401 for tenants' interests. Up to March 31, 1915, £7047 was spent on the island, 23rd report, 1915, Cmd. 8076.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

175 [795] a system of dioceses and raised St. Patrick's Church at Armagh to the primacy in the eleventh century.

175 162 But it was the Norsemen who established the first port-cities of Ireland—Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick—and provided the Anglo-Normans with bases from which to attempt their conquest. It was the fate of these newcomers, as of earlier invaders, to be absorbed, but the towns which they and their successors established became the instruments of Anglicization. Yet outside the nine south-eastern counties where the Anglo-Norman influence was strongest, there are few towns which are older than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as late as 1841 less than 15 per cent of the Irish population was urban. It is significant that even today no inland Irish town has a population reaching 20,000: in the Republic, indeed, only one or two exceed 10,000, and that barely. It is the immemorial peasant tradition which dominates the heart of Ireland. In some inland counties the rural population is still as much as 90 per cent of the total: for the Republic of Ireland as a whole it amounts to 62 per cent, and the figure for the more industrialized counties of Northern Ireland is only slightly under 50 per cent. In Ulster the plantation of English and especially of Scots Presbyterian settlers in the seventeenth century was at last successful in maintaining its identity, though as we shall see the material culture is strongly moulded to its Irish environment. Partly because this region of entry has received through the centuries almost every culture-layer that has been deposited in Ireland, there is perhaps a greater variety of survivals in Ulster than in any other part of Ireland. In some ways this most British part of Ireland is also the most Irish.

●311 361 175 Although the tribal nomadism of medieval Ireland has been exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the pastoral tradition has dominated Irish life through the ages. Cultivation was certainly practised from Neolithic times, but the older crops, wheat and barley, were in course of time supplemented and in many parts replaced by oats, which became the corn of Ireland as of Scotland, food for men as well as animals. For half the year the arable land was under stubble, pastured and manured by grazing stock, so that the favoured acres around the settle-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ment—the infield—might produce grain year after year. The rough grazing beyond—the outfield—was broken up periodically in temporary enclosures, and it may be assumed that such a system had developed from the shifting agriculture of prehistoric times. Relics of outfield cultivation, usually in association with family-communes, can be traced in many regions of difficulty throughout Western Europe, both in the mountains of the centre and along the oceanic fringe from Spain to Norway. 'If we knew medieval England completely', states Sir John Clapham, 'we should find plenty of it.'[1] In most lowland areas of good soil throughout western Europe, however, it was replaced by a system involving large open fields, normally three in number, each of which was used in rotation for autumn sown corn, usually wheat, followed by spring corn and fallow. This scheme called for considerable organization and a large variety of tools and implements: it came to be governed by complex regulations and controlled by the lord of the manor, and it is significant that the feudal system and in due course the nation-state evolved in areas where the openfield economy was practised. There was more freedom and flexibility in the smaller and simpler outfield system, and in Ireland the feudal order was successfully established only in the English Pale, where the three-field system was introduced by Anglo-Norman settlers. Elsewhere the tribal system prevailed, and for the study of folk-customs the important unit within that system was the family commune living in clustered house-groups, hamlets or clachans. The prevailing cattle-economy called for a minimum of equipment, the subordinate cultivation little more than spades or light ploughs and hand-operated tools. Even the lowliest members of society had some interest in the land and its cultivation was not beyond their means. Possession of a cow, a horse, a pig or a few sheep demanded even less in the way of equipment and tools. The simple arts and crafts of prehistoric times proved adequate, and the poorest man was able to play his part in the community and stand on his own feet. A democratic

[1]H. J. Clapham, *A Concise Economic History of Britain* (1949), 48. Similarly Gilbert Slater, *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields* (1907) regards what he terms the Celtic system 'as influencing to varying degrees the type of village community in England.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

way of life was fostered by the ease with which the humbler members of the community could compete with others in arts demanding not wealth but personal qualities, in poetry, oratory, song and physical prowess. Down to our own day the small size of the average farm has encouraged the survival of simple tools and limited the acquisition of machines. Subdivision of farms and the depressing effects of short leases and absenteeism were contributory factors. Subdivision of holdings was prohibited under an Act of 1881, but like so many other prohibited practices it did not cease.

The retention of many of the attributes of a peasant society is the key to the survival of the folk ways with which we are concerned in the following chapters. Even the Great Famine which marks a grim watershed in social and economic history did not entirely obliterate them, though it had such far-reaching effects that it might be regarded as the end of prehistoric times in Ireland. First in importance is the strength of blood-ties in extended family groups, still maintained even in many urban communities. During the air raids on Belfast, for example, the problem of finding billets for evacuated homeless was complicated by the refusal of large groups of related families to be separated from each other. In remote rural areas the blood-tie is a dominant force, governing economic as well as social relationships,[1] its loyalties overriding the impartial administration of justice. A relative is a 'friend', even if 'far-out'—that is, remotely connected—and friendship is a matter of blood relationship. A peasant community is concerned first and foremost with the maintenance and continuity of society: it does not judge—and cannot be judged—purely by economic standards. Immemorially peasant families have been large, and childbearing is widely regarded as part of the ritual necessary to bring success with the stock and the crops. In rural Ireland barrenness in a wife still tends to be regarded as an unnatural and disgraceful thing, and many superstitious cures for 'the sterile curse' are recorded. This is but one example of a widespread attitude towards life, to which comparative anthropology offers many parallels. Sympathetic magic, or the performance

[1] C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940), Ch. 13.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 from it. The Gaelic conquest of the Irish Midlands was not completed until the sixth century A.D., and down to the Anglo-Norman invasions the distinction between free and tributary tribes remained.[1] The counties bordering the middle Shannon—Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and the western parts of Westmeath and Offaly—are probably as full of survivals as any in Ireland. This is the land of the loy and the steeveen (Chapter X) and the last home of many an ancient custom. The lowland [133] of which it is the centre is floored with limestone levelled off at about 200 ft. but diversified by occasional low hills, by intricate solution lakes and by glacial eskers and drifts among which lie countless small lakes and bogs (Fig. 3). It is hard to realize [489] the isolation from which this area suffered before the introduction of improved wheeled vehicles and the coming of the canal and the railway.[2]

● 311 Let us now look at the cultural landscape which the hand of man has fitted to the physical frame of the island. Although man has been in this country for only a fraction of the time he has occupied South England and the continent, his mark is everywhere. Wander where you will through the length and breadth of the island, and through the dozens of lesser isles around its shores, and you will never fail to see traces of human activity, past or present, even in the most empty and inaccessible spots. Apart from the more or less datable remains of church and rath, castle and cairn, the land is covered with the marks of man's toil. The history of rural Ireland could be read out of doors, had we the skill, from the scrawlings made by men in the field boundaries of successive periods. In them the unlettered countryman wrote his runes on the land. The student of historical geography has been greatly assisted in the task of interpreting this palimpsest by the new tool of air-photography which, given suitable conditions, will pick out all man-made marks on the face of the earth.

311 178 The sturdy field walls and hedged banks which give the countryside its intimate character are by no means as immutable

[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), 204.

[2] Improvements in public transport were initiated by the Italian, Bianconi, who, profiting from the cavalry horses thrown on the market after the Napoleonic wars, began his famous fleet of 'cars' in Tipperary in 1815.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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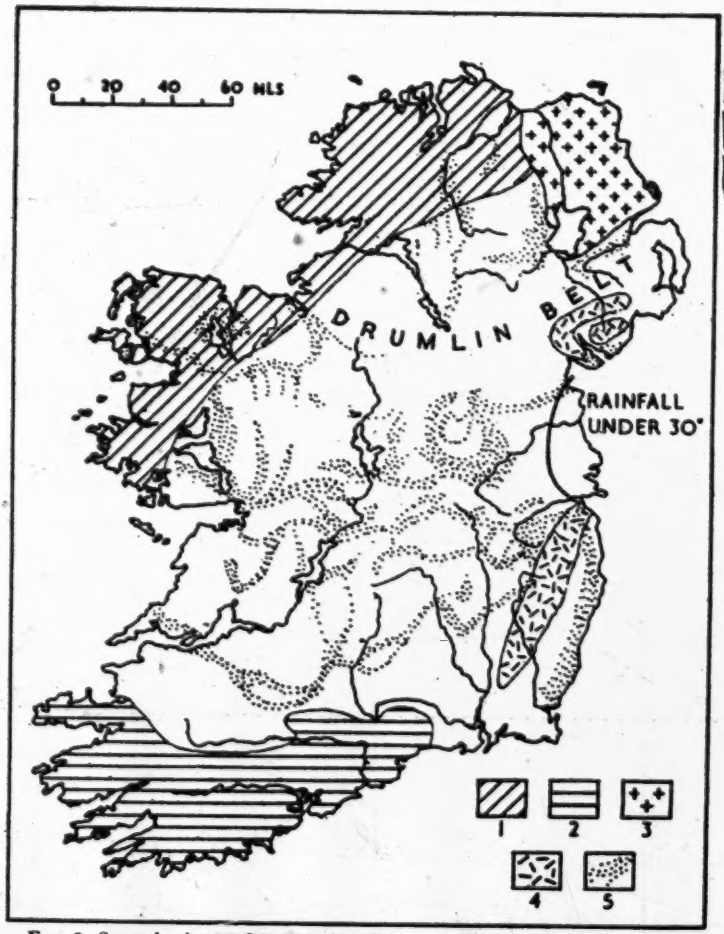

FIG. 8. Some landscape features. (1) Caledonian Highlands, (2) Armorican ridge and valley, (3) North-eastern basalts, (4) Eastern granites, (5) Glacial sands and gravels (eskers) (after J. K. Charlesworth). Drumlins are little hills composed of glacial drift. See Pl. 5, 1.

as they appear. The pattern they make has changed with the centuries in response to new needs and new tools. At present we are in a period of fairly rapid change, for the tractor calls for larger and more regular fields than those made by the spade

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

178 and the horse-plough, and old hedges are being grubbed up to
311 give the machine elbow-room. This in turn leads to a demand
for larger farms, for the small holdings which are characteristic of Ireland (one half of the farms are between fifteen and fifty acres) have customarily just so many fields as will give a proper balance between pasture and plough, and where two or three tiny fields are knocked into one the balance is upset. In the same way earlier technological advances, though on a smaller scale, have changed the cultural landscape at different periods. Demographic crises have had similar effects. Before the Great Famine, for example, 80 per cent of all Irish farms were under fifteen acres.

From the earliest times, it seems, Ireland was a land of small holdings and small field-plots. Yet the actual pattern of small hedged fields as we know it today is of no great antiquity. For the most part it is a consequence of the agrarian revolution which affected the country, at various dates in different parts, between about 1750 and 1850. It was the planting of thorn hedgerows and the building of stone walls that fixed what had previously been ill-defined and temporary field boundaries, associated with the openfield or rundale system of land use. With permanent enclosure went the consolidation of holdings into compact independent blocks, though in some districts independence was achieved without grouping the fields together so that properties consist of scattered hedged fields which reflect the disposition of plots under the earlier openfield system. The hedge in fact has had a hard struggle for survival in the poorer districts. Both the thorns and the gates which enclosure brought with it were frequently hacked down for
[417] firewood, and to this day a wooden gate is a rarity in the countryside: the field gates are almost invariably of iron. There are many districts where the thorn hedge itself is almost unknown, where low earthen mounds half overgrown with bramble and whin (gorse) give us a glimpse of a stage between permanent enclosures and the openfields which they replaced. In Donegal gangs of villagers threw down the landlords' fences as quickly as they were erected,[1] and in some parts of the county they are still kept in repair for the summer months only.

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 41.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

Little attention has been given to the Irish openfield system.[1] It has escaped the notice of historians because the revolution which broke it down was a prolonged and silent one, involving no Enclosure Acts such as those which record the disappearance of the English openfields. Under the Irish system it was the practice, in some areas at least, for the plots to change hands periodically among co-partners by the casting of lots. Thus the transition to consolidated holdings was easier than under the English system, where the scattered plough strips were apparently permanently held. It is important to examine the openfield system more closely than might seem to be warranted by its almost complete disappearance from the modern scene, because it was against this background that many of the tools and customs we shall discuss were evolved. Just as in lowland England the English village was inseparable from its openfields, so in Ireland hamlets or 'clachans' accompanied the old form of land utilization. They will crop up again and again in the chapters which follow. But today and for the last century or so the isolated farm has characterized the Irish rural scene (Fig. 4). From some elevated viewpoint in the mountainy parts one may count hundreds of small whitewashed homesteads dotted among the fields, each nestling behind a handful of wind-bent trees and approached by its own access-road—the loaning or borheen beloved of the sentimental song writers. Every farmstead has the air of a fortress, an independent unit within its jealously guarded boundary fences, defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars (Fig. 5) and claiming rights of way whose protection keeps the town solicitors profitably engaged. The degree of independence has been notably strengthened by the Land Acts (1869–1925) under which former tenants have become their own landlords. Peasant-proprietorship is an established fact throughout the country, though it has by no means solved Ireland's problems as some politician-prophets claimed it would.

The truth is that, taking the country as a whole, most of the farms are too small to be truly independent of their neighbours. Bitter experience and the traditional land-hunger of a community

[1] E. E. Evans, *Geography*, 24 (1939), 24–36; D. McCourt, *Economic History Review*, 7, 369–76.

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311 where the land has been almost the sole available re-
[578] source go far to explain the jealousy with which established rights are maintained, but there are deeper needs and bonds in the rural community.

[491]
[102]

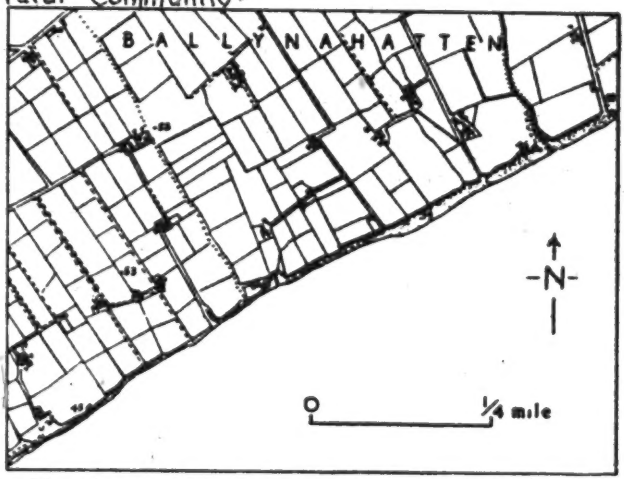

FIG. 4. Map of scattered farms on the Co. Down coast, showing seaweed-roads. (Based upon the Ordnance map with the sanction of the Controller, H.M.S.O.)

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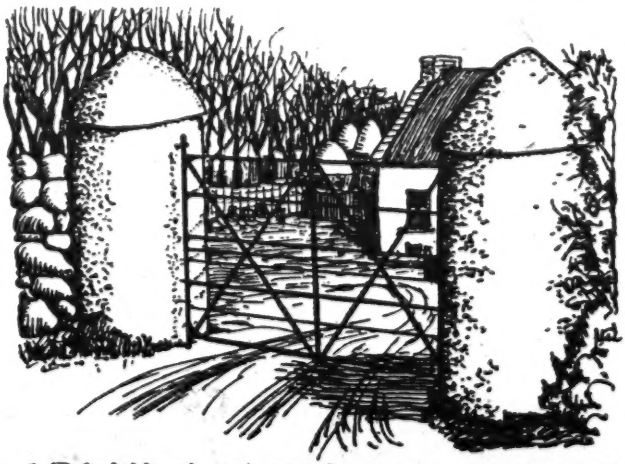

FIG. 5. 'Defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars:' an Ulster farm.

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the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

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continuous tradition of partnership. Rundale, as we find it in decay in the nineteenth century, was a diseased system that had outlived its purpose. A few examples will serve to illustrate the appalling conditions to which it led when the removal of traditional checks and the adoption of the potato had allowed the population to expand recklessly within the framework of an inherited system of land use and settlement.

Our first example comes from the present century, and from Co. Mayo. The clachan of Rathlackan, when the Congested Districts Board tried to disperse it in 1918, was occupied by fifty-six families whose land was scattered in 1,500 fragments, some of them no more than a dozen square yards in area (Fig. 6). A two-acre holding was split into eighteen tiny plots, and on the average twenty-seven lots were held by each farm. Such was the confusion that it was not until 1942 that the process of redistribution and consolidation of holdings was completed, with the result that 'fairly compact holdings' were provided for thirty-two families.[1]

The following quotations are from the pamphlets of an 'improving landlord' in Donegal, and refer to a period about a hundred years earlier, in the 1840s.

'We suppose it would not be believed that in this district, until very lately, fences were altogether unknown. In some instances a tenant having any part of a townland (no matter how small), had his proportion in thirty or forty different places, and without fences between them. One poor man who had his inheritance in thirty-two different places, abandoned them in utter despair of ever being able to make them out . . . The rundale system was a complete bar to any attempt at improvement; as, on a certain day, all the cattle belonging to the townland were brought from the mountains and allowed to run indiscriminately over the arable land. And in spring no individual occupier would set or sow, or labour in the fields, before a certain day, when the cattle were again sent to the hills, until after harvest. In one instance a small field of about half an acre was held by twenty-six people.'[2]

[1] *The Irish Times* (12th Jan., 1948). This was achieved only at the cost of the physical collapse of one land-officer and the mental breakdown of another.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22, 46.

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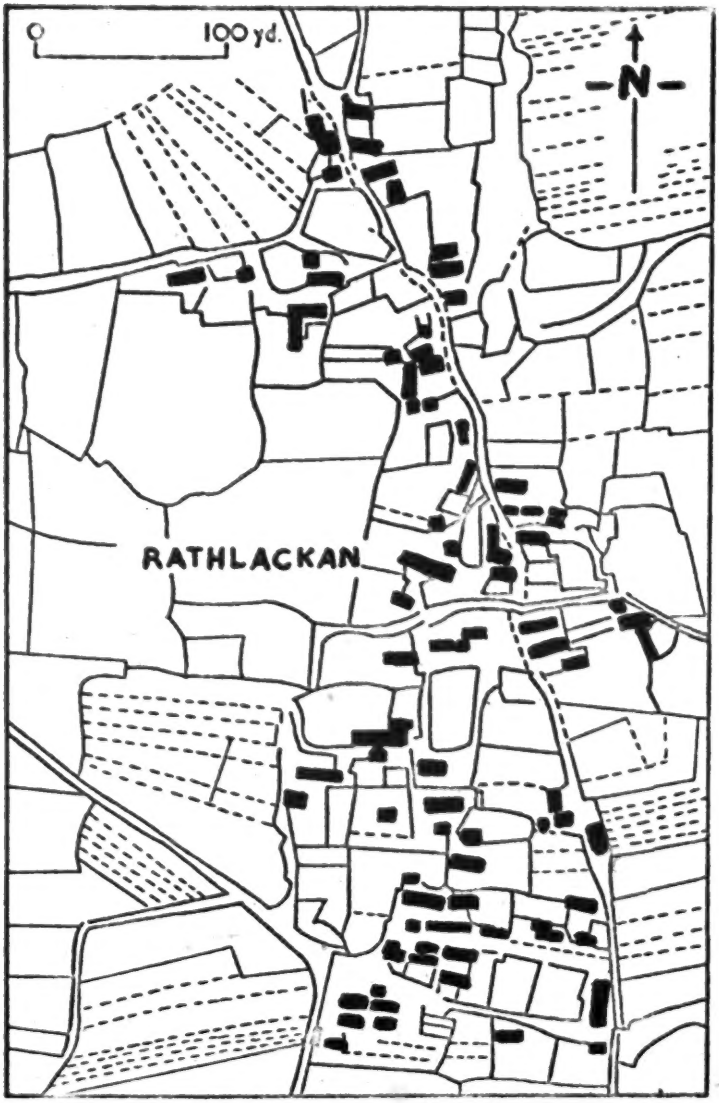

FIG. 6. Rathlackan, Co. Mayo: the rundale cluster with some of the openfield strips as they were before reorganization began in 1918.

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In Connacht conditions were even worse, as may be judged by the persistence of the Rathlackan cluster down to 1942. So swollen were some of these settlements that one of them, Menlough near Galway, now consisting of a dozen farms set among the ruins of others, is said to have had 2,000 inhabitants in 1845, while lacking 'head or centre, market, church, chapel or school'.[1]

In Ulster there are many examples of small clusters which have persisted because they did not become swollen to disastrous proportions. They were characteristic, for instance, of flax-growing areas and were occupied by farmer-weavers who depended on each others' services at harvest-time, and they survived the crisis of the great famine although many decayed with the decline of hand-loom weaving soon afterwards. Despite all the disadvantages of life in these clachans, their inhabitants were reluctant to leave them. It was stated in evidence before the Devon Commission that even if they were moving only half a mile away 'they were crying as if they were going to America'. It was in fact from such decaying house-clusters that a great number of the emigrants to the United States set out across the seas in the second half of last century.

[1]T. C. Foster, *Letters*, 293.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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These clachans, while some had their speciality such as weaving or thatching, were concerned primarily and almost exclusively with agriculture and attracted none of the elements of the true village, whether church, inn or shops. Itinerant 'tinkers and tailors' paid periodic visits and with the pedlars and beggars brought news of other districts, but the economic and social needs of the hamlet were met by periodic visits to the fairs and by seasonal gatherings of various kinds. Within the group the bonds of kinship were close and strong, and ties of marriage carrying reciprocal responsibilities linked one clachan with another within small neighbourhood units consisting of perhaps half a dozen townlands. With the close kinship bonds went corresponding rivalries with adjacent neighbourhoods which provided social motive force by acting as incentives. These rivalries broke out characteristically into feuds and blood-letting at fairs and gatherings. But in later days, at any rate, internal rivalries and squabbles were more conspicuous and found more opportunities within overgrown kinship groups which had become too complicated to function smoothly. A few illustrations will suffice.

One visitor explained the presence of the back-doors on clustered houses, for which we shall offer other explanations in the following chapter, by the fact that the women needed an escape when too hotly engaged in rows with neighbours.[1] Joint ownership sometimes extended to single animals with strange results. For example: 'three men were concerned in one horse; but the poor brute was rendered useless, as the unfortunate foot of the supernumerary leg remained unshod . . . and accordingly it became quite lame.[2] We are reminded of the difficulties arising from the joint ownership of fruit trees in some Mediterranean countries. It was in Donegal too that I heard of a ram which died of exposure when it was part-shorn by one of its joint owners. In the same district a man wishing to build a wall around one of his fields but unable to get his neighbour to agree, deliberately erected it a yard or two on his own side of the boundary so that the neighbour would still be forced to herd or tether his cow to prevent it trespassing on the

[1] Isaac Weld, *Statistical Survey of Roscommon* (1832), 476.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 23.

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narrow strip between the boundary and the wall. 'Fights, trespasses, confusion, disputes and assaults, were the natural and unavoidable consequences of the rundale system.'[1] On the other hand we must recall the extreme reluctance with which the system was at last abandoned, the social benefits it conferred on members of the kin. The reforming landlord, Lord George Hill, comments that 'the pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together, made them consider the removal of the houses, from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built to the separate farms, a great grievance.'[2] Another writer gives as the basis of the tenants' grievance, 'the recollection of nights of social concourse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of defence against bailiff or gauger'.[3] There were ceilidhes and spinning parties, and many a clachan had its shanachie (story-teller) and its fiddler or piper—usually a maimed or simple person—who accompanied with folk-tunes. Folk-songs, occupational airs and legendary tales were kept alive in this way. Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains.

The openfield which lay around the cluster, normally on the down-hill side so that the vital manure could be 'sliped' downslope (see Chapter XIII), seems to have been kept in cultivation in some areas at least year after year. This was the infield, in contrast to the outfield, the outlying rough pasture bits of which were temporarily reclaimed and then left to rest for long periods. We shall return to the plough and spade and methods of cultivation in another place but may refer here to the allotment of the holdings in the common fields. Although in many parts of the country the holdings, by the end of the eighteenth century, had become fixed in their scattered parcels on the several qualities of land in the openfield, there is abundant

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.
[2] ibid., 42.
[3] W. R. Wilde, *Dublin University Magazine*, 41 (1853), 20.

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evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean, even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat. Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable. Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter. And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at that season, when food for livestock is scarce.

Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen

[1]Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 340.
[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.
[3]ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.
[4]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.
[5]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

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tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year!'[1] Sea wrack and shell sand were carted up to thirty miles inland from the coast.[2] In the absence of permanent fences the majority of the cattle must be moved away during the summer and those remaining carefully herded or tethered on the outfield, or put in temporary enclosures to manure that part of the outfield which was due for cultivation.[3] In its origins and full development the rundale system depended on the movement of most of the livestock to summer booleys situated some distance away. Here the widely distributed uplands and boglands played their part in the traditional economy. Although late survivals of the booleying system are hard to find, little of it managing to outlive the crisis of the Great Famine, we are beginning to track down its history and significance. The Irish texts are as disappointing and vague as they are in many matters touching the common people, but folk-memory comes to our aid. There are stories, and place-name evidence, from most parts of the country, and regional variants of the practice are being studied and mapped.[4]

We give first some quotations from the few discerning observers who drew attention to the practice. Edmund Spenser's enlightened spirit of inquiry is shown in his remark: 'Have you ever heard what was the occasion and first beginning of this custom? for it is good to know the same.' He writes, in 1595, 'There is one use amongst them, to keep their cattle and to live themselves the most part of the year in boolies, pasturing upon the mountain and waste wild places.'[5] His objections to the system, however, reveal his Englishry: the booleys hid outlaws and loose people, and the wandering life made the Irish barbarous. The following brief reference comes from O'Flaherty's famous account of West Connacht: 'In summertime they drive their cattle to the mountains, where such as look to the cattle live in small cabins for that season.'[6] In the eighteenth

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country* (1951), 141.
[3] W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 131.
[4] J. M. Graham, 'Transhumance in Ireland', in *The Advancement of Science*, 57 (1958), 74–8.
[5] Quoted in H. Morley, *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James I* (1890), 67.
[6] R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 17.

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intense effort, when the toilers were spurred on by rivalries in their efforts to avoid the bad luck which tradition wisely bestowed on the laggards. The seasonal festivals which marked the end of these periods of strain—at the beginning of May and November—were not merely celebrations of work completed and a new season begun, but also the occasion for the release of emotional stresses. The Irishman's capacity for bouts of strenuous work, and his more notorious addiction to spells of complete idleness, are surely related to the experience accumulated through countless springs, harvests, and winters. Winter was a dead season for man as for the world around him. It was no time for fairs, fighting or raiding, for selling or even stealing animals which were not worth the trouble of stealing: the problem was to maintain life in them.

Long tradition explains the neglect of winter ploughing which is still characteristic of the greater part of Ireland. The infield stubble was required to augment the very poor and limited outfield grazing available for the wintering stock. There are some townlands, in the west, where to this day all the fields become common grazing during the winter, and only the strongly-enclosed 'gardens' are safe places to grow cabbages, for instance, or a little rye for the thatch. Moreover even with improved ploughs the grass tends to grow in the furrows of ploughed land during a mild winter. And when it is recalled that much of the old infield land was on sloping ground, if only for the sake of the natural drainage thus provided, it can be conceded that there was wisdom in not breaking the earth in winter and opening the way to soil erosion. Moreover the loss of fertility by the leaching of exposed soils can be serious.

Preparing the land for seed had thus to await the spring, and pressure of time as well as the uncertainties of weather strengthened the tradition of co-operative labour in the form of pooled plough-teams in the infield and gangs of ridgemakers in the outfield. The plough-team, normally of four horses or oxen supplied by as many neighbours, had to be supplemented by spade and mell, for the furrows were badly turned, and after the seed-bed had been prepared and the corn sown the seed was covered with shovelled soil. In order to facilitate drainage,

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averaging some twenty feet, and they have had a far longer life. In their natural condition their surface is slightly convex, and they may come to stand, perversely, above the level of the surrounding countryside, though they began life in ill-drained hollows where reeds grew to make fen-peat. These lower layers tend to be alkaline in nature and when the upper layers are cut away the bogs may be turned into productive cropland if adequate drainage can be provided. Small areas of this type occur to the south of Lough Neagh, but Ireland has nothing to compare with the English fenlands. Yet the Irish bogs take their place in the agricultural economy as summer grazing grounds, formerly for mixed stock and for cattle in particular, latterly mainly for sheep. In the past, too, considerable use was made of buried timber dug from the bogs,[1] of oak for roofing beams and of pine for kindling and resinous 'splits' to give light. The long 'trying iron' with which buried timber was located is shown in Fig. 66, together with the massive 'fir hatchet' and 'fir rooter'.

To the ecologist the bogs provide a unique field of research into the history of the occupation of the country by plants, animals and man. In the waterlogged depths of the peats everything is preserved, even the tiniest seeds and insects. Centuries of successive summers are chronicled in countless pollens of trees and grasses which the botanist can identify and thereby reconstruct the changes of vegetation from prehistoric times down to the recent past. When man appeared on the scene not only did he leave his pathways and possessions in the bogs, but, as we have seen, he was an agent in their growth. His tools of stone and copper, bronze and iron, evolving in that order, are found lying at levels which can be correlated with the vegetation-history by analysing the pollens that cling to them. Thanks to the labours of Knud Jessen and Frank Mitchell we now have an approximate chronological sequence of landscapes and human cultures in Ireland going back several thousand years.

The pollen grains from the lowest layers of the upland bogs include those of shrubs such as hazel, birch, rowan and thorn, as well as, occasionally, those of cereals and the weeds of cultivation. Evidently the clearings soon became threatened with forest and field weeds, and these companions of the earliest

[1] E. E. Evans, *Irish Heritage*, 142; A. T. Lucas, *Béaloideas*, 23, 71–134.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely destroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island
form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are
situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the
rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are
Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common
land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the
monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common
land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the com-
munity. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 276
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve
the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small
enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop
are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes
purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [443]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an
aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom. 333

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numerous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events. 311 241 103

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow. 103 823

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland. 504 505 [175] [178]

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561 461 178 561 [521] [562] complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

• 311 423 [131] [804] Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows." Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron, the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

[657] [427] The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[434] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent 434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts 437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils • [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the mainland and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

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the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although inheritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional subcultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establishment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "villages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, separated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices,

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision